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| WRITTEN STATEMENT BYTHE WELSH GOVERNMENT |

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| **TITLE**  | A Summary of Responses to the Phase 1 Consultation on A Fairer Council Tax |
| **DATE**  | **16 December 2022** |
| **BY**  | **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government**  |

I am pleased to publish today a summary of responses to the Welsh Government’s Phase 1 consultation on [*A Fairer Council Tax*](https://gov.wales/fairer-council-tax)*.* The consultation outlined an ambitious programme of reforms as the starting point on our journey towards meeting the Programme for Government and Cooperation Agreement commitment to deliver a fairer and more progressive council tax for Wales.

We know that council tax helps to fund essential public services, like schools and social care, from which we all receive huge benefits. Council tax is also a key policy lever for ensuring important financial contributions from households are fairly distributed. I am committed to reforming the system so that it reflects our current and future economic circumstances, funds services that benefit everyone, builds in regular updates to keep the tax fair in the future, and remains a local tax that connects people with communities.

The consultation sought early views from individuals, organisations and key stakeholders on three broad areas of reform including: a proposed property revaluation and rebanding exercise with regular updates in the future; a review of council tax discounts, disregards, exemptions and premiums; and a review of our national Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The consultation was clear that reforms would not seek to increase the total amount of council tax raised overall from council taxpayers.

The consultation ran from 12 July to 4 October 2022 and received over 1,000 responses, reflecting a wide spectrum of views and interests. I am grateful to everyone who participated.

I have carefully considered the consultation responses and we will now reflect on the information provided in response to the consultation alongside detailed evidence about the operation of the council tax system and our ambitions for the reform of council tax. These considerations will inform the next steps we take to make council tax fairer. Where we intend to make future changes, I am committed to outlining these in detail in a Phase 2 consultation later in 2023.

[The summary of consultation responses is available here.](https://gov.wales/fairer-council-tax)

This important reform agenda is part of our Cooperation Agreement with Plaid Cymru. I will continue to work closely with the Designated Member, Cefin Campbell, as well as with key stakeholders including local government, property valuation and socioeconomic specialists, and a range of organisations that represent the people of Wales. I am also committed to continuing to engage with citizens about the purpose and delivery of a fairer system.

It remains my ambition to achieve meaningful reform over the course of this Senedd term, as Wales continues to face unprecedented challenges and a cost-of-living crisis. The benefits of a more progressive system are well-documented and we must continue our work to reduce wealth inequalities and disparities across Wales.

I will keep Members informed of developments as the work progresses.